

A Note on *Limnia paludicola* Elberg (Dipt., Sciomyzidae)

By L. N. KIDD

In a recent paper on the Sciomyzidae (*Ent. Record*, **78**: 227-230), Mr. J. E. Collin has referred to the species described by Elberg in 1965 (*Entomologicheskoye Obozreniye*, **44**: 189-198) as *Limnia paludicola*. He points out that on dissecting the genitalia of several specimens of *Limnia* he found that each of the seven examined had a different arrangement of the small differences considered by Elberg to be of specific importance. In view of this he found it impossible to accept *L. paludicola* as a distinct species from *L. unguicornis* Scop.

Prior to reading Mr. Collin's comments I had been prompted by Dr. Knutson's outline of a Handbook of British Sciomyzidae to look over some of the males of *L. unguicornis* at Werneth Park Museum, Oldham, and in the collection at the Manchester Museum. Some half dozen males were dissected and the genitalia examined in glycerine. The conclusion drawn was that two males taken at Stoke St. Gregory, Somerset, on 8.viii.1934 by H. Britten were *L. unguicornis* the rest agreeing fairly well with Dr. Knutson's figure of *L. paludicola* Elberg. These latter specimens were as follows:—Oxford: Hogley Bog, one male, 11.viii.1915, A. H. Hamm; Westmorland: Hale, one male, 21.vi.1929 H. Britten; Yorkshire: Askham Bog, two males, 11.vii.1954, L. N. Kidd. The genitalia of the latter seem to be fairly constant in form and be reasonably distinct from the *L. unguicornis* examined.

From Mr. Collin's observations it would appear that there is some variation in the form of the genitalia of *L. unguicornis* and it may well be that this variation is such that *L. paludicola* will have to be sunk as a synonym of *unguicornis* as already recommended by Mr. Collin. However, Dr. Knutson informs me that he has been satisfied with his own determinations of both *L. unguicornis* and *L. paludicola*, and that Verbeke also seems to have accepted Elberg's species.

It would appear therefore that a careful study of the variation in a large series is probably desirable before removing *paludicola* from our list. I should be very pleased to dissect and examine any males of the genus *Limnia* which collectors may care to send on to me. May I take this opportunity of thanking Dr. L. V. Knutson for his kind help in this matter, and Mr. Allan Brindle for the opportunity of examining the collections at Manchester Museum.

Werneth Park Study Centre and Natural History Museum, Oldham, Lancs.
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COMMENT ON THE ABOVE NOTE

The above note is about a supposed new species included under the name of the common species *Limnia unguicornis*, distinguished only by slight differences in certain parts of its male genitalia.

It is a recognized fact by all students of genital characters, that small differences, *within the range of normal variation*, must be expected, especially in the case of differences *in certain parts* only of its genitalia. Normal variation of course includes cases in which practically no differences can be noted, and cases in which the differences are very variable.

To me it appears obvious that *paludicola* Elb. cannot be considered a distinct species.—J. E. COLLIN.